

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

NHL

STATE:	Virginia
COUNTY:	Rockbridge LEXINGTON (CITY)
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY DATE	5/30/74

1. NAME	
COMMON:	Virginia Military Institute Historic District
AND/OR HISTORIC:	Virginia Military Institute

2. LOCATION			
STREET AND NUMBER:			
CITY OR TOWN:		CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT:	
Lexington			
STATE	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
Virginia		Rockbridge (N CITY)	

3. CLASSIFICATION				
CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP		STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)				
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Comments _____ _____

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY		
OWNER'S NAME:		
Superintendent (for VMI and the Commonwealth of Virginia)		
STREET AND NUMBER:		
Virginia Military Institute		
CITY OR TOWN:	STATE:	CODE
Lexington	Virginia	

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION		
COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:		
Rockbridge County Courthouse, Deedbook K, p. 74, K, p. 389.		
STREET AND NUMBER:		
Corner of Main and Washington		
CITY OR TOWN:	STATE	CODE
Lexington	Virginia	

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS		
TITLE OF SURVEY:		
None		
DATE OF SURVEY:		
<input type="checkbox"/> Federal <input type="checkbox"/> State <input type="checkbox"/> County <input type="checkbox"/> Local		
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:		
STREET AND NUMBER:		
CITY OR TOWN:	STATE:	CODE

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7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

(Check One)					
<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
(Check One)			(Check One)		
<input type="checkbox"/> Altered			<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered		
			<input type="checkbox"/> Moved		
			<input type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (If known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The historic district encompasses a considerable area of the Virginia Military Institute. It is of varied composition, an ensemble of historic and architectural values and associations; and a complex of buildings constructed during the most historic period, 1839-1862, and continually thereafter to the present time. The buildings are mostly neo-Gothic, mixing the subsidiary styles variously known as collegiate, academic, military, cathedral, and Tudor Gothic. In nearly all buildings there is evidenced the conscious attempt to repeat such features as the battlemented parapets. The historic district is shown in the accompanying ground plan. The following buildings, the most important within the district, are keyed to that plan.

I. From the Founding until the War, 1839-62 is the most important time from the standpoint of the historical development of the school as an institute of military training. It is at this time that VMI shared with Norwich Academy the esteem of being the model for the State and private military schools forming then and to the present day. The following buildings date from that period.

1. The Barracks: Already a National Historic Landmark, the original part was designed by Alexander Jackson Davis in 1850-51. Bombarded and partly destroyed during the Civil War, it was rebuilt shortly afterward. It was redesigned in 1892 by Isaac Eugene Alexander Rose, added to, and completed by 1900. Central to Rose's work was the reorientation of the front facade from the original Washington Arch to the Jackson Memorial Arch looking onto the parade ground. In 1916 the Barracks was redesigned and augmented by Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue. Goodhue provided for the completion of the Barracks quadrangle. In 1948, the firm of Carneal and Johnson designed a new wing for the Barracks.

2. Commandant's Quarters (Matthew Fontaine Maury House): Also designed by A. J. Davis in 1850-51, construction was completed in 1852. It is the only one of the five Davis buildings at VMI which is asymmetrical. The house consists of a basement, two stories, one room on the third story of the tower. The house is surmounted by a battlemented parapet with corbelled brick band in a serrated pattern. The central block consists of an octagonal saloon, three bays front with center door, and the 3-story tower flush to the east side of the octagonal block. An east and west wing each of two bays extend off from the central block. An octagonal bay extends off the west parlor and a side entrance hall extends from the east dining room. The tudor-arched windows and doors are surmounted by tudor-arched hood-moulding. Above basement level the wall construction is brick with stuccoed (float) finish. Although burned in 1864 as the result of General Hunter's raid, the doors and windows appear to be original. Structurally the house is intact. In 1914, Goodhue moved the building back from the historic parade ground a short distance and reconstructed the A. J. Davis design which apparently had not changed much in the interim.

(Continued)

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8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century | |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) (not applicable) 1818-1914

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Military | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | | |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Formally organized in 1839, the "West Point of the South" was the earliest and has become perhaps the best known of the State-supported military colleges. Its resemblance to the United States Military Academy at West Point is not fortuitous. During the 20 years prior to the Civil War, VMI graduated men destined to win fame in the Civil War that lay ahead. Of its faculty, the most notable was the immortal "Stonewall" Jackson. At New Market, on May 15, 1864, the cadets materially aided in the defeat of Franz Sigel's invading Union Army. In World War I, VMI gave 1,830 trained men to the armed forces, including five general officers. In World War II, the number was 4,100 including 62 officers of general or flag rank. The most illustrious of these was General of the Army George C. Marshall.

History

Colonel Claude Crozet, a brilliant French military engineer who began his military career in the service of Napoleon Bonaparte, is justly known as the father of the VMI, for he, more than any other individual, moulded the character of the school. Forced out of the French military service by the downfall of Napoleon, Crozet came to the United States in 1816. On the recommendation of Lafayette and Albert Gallatin, he was appointed assistant professor of engineering at West Point on October 1 of that year, and within six months he was head of the department. Under his influence, engineering instruction became much more systematized and greater emphasis was placed on a thorough groundwork in mathematics.

About the time of Crozet's return to Virginia, the plans for opening a State-supported military school had reached maturity. The site chosen was the State arsenal at Lexington, and there on November 11, 1839, the doors were opened for the first class. At its opening, the VMI had a faculty of two men and a corps of 23 cadets. The statute authorizing creation of the institution provided for a military school to give instruction in military science and in other branches of knowledge as well, and further provided that the cadet corps should form the "public guard" of the State arsenal. Aside from those general regulations, the General Assembly left the character and the curriculum of the school in the hands of its board of visitors, of whom Crozet was chosen president.

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8. Significance: (1) Virginia Military Institute

Under his six-year regime, the VMI was moulded closely after the pattern of West Point. The regulations of the earlier institution were adopted almost in toto and the uniform regulations were nearly identical. Because the school was not primarily designed to train men for professional military careers, the curriculum was not identical with that of West Point; however, military science and mathematics were strongly emphasized.

During the next 20 years, as the shadow of civil war grew more threatening, the VMI continued to grow and to graduate men destined to win fame in the bloody struggle which lay ahead. The Confederacy was to gain immeasurably in military strength from the support of her graduates and faculty, of which latter the immortal "Stonewall" Jackson was one.

During the war the institution continued in operation, though with reduced faculty and cadet corps. As the successive classes were graduated, they marched away to join the Confederate armies. At New Market, on May 15, 1864, the cadets added a glorious chapter to the VMI tradition with a charge which materially aided in the defeat of Franz Sigel's invading Union army. The following month, David Hunter's Union troops entered Lexington and burned the institution.

Reopened after the war, the school continued to grow and to graduate men who have upheld its traditions in peace and in war. Approximately one-tenth of each graduating class receives regular commissions in the Army, Air Force or Marine Corps. In World War I, the VMI gave 1,830 trained men to the armed forces, including five general officers. In the Second World War, the number was 4,100, including 62 officers of general or flag rank. Among the illustrious graduates was General of the Army George C. Marshall.

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Lyle, Royster, "Three Gothic Residences on the VMI Parade Ground," Unpublished, George C. Marshall Research Foundation, Lexington, Virginia, 1973.

Wise, Jennings C., The Military History of the Virginia Military Institute from 1859 to 1865, Lynchburg, Virginia, 1915.

Sarles, Frank B., "Inventory Data Sheets," National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings, National Park Service, 1960.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY				O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES			
CORNER	LATITUDE				LONGITUDE			
	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds		Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	
	°	'	"		°	'	"	
NW	37°	47'	31"	79°	26'	29"		
NE	37°	47'	31"	79°	25'	48"		
SE	37°	47'	18"	79°	25'	48"		
SW	37°	47'	18"	79°	26'	29"		

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 60 acres

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: Benjamin Levy, Senior Historian

ORGANIZATION: Division of Historic and Architectural Surveys, National Park Service. DATE: January 14, 1974

STREET AND NUMBER: 1100 L Street NW

CITY OR TOWN: Washington STATE: District of Columbia CODE:

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National ☐ State ☐ Local ☐

Name _____

Title _____

Date _____

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date _____

ATTEST:

Keeper of The National Register

Date 5/30/74

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7. Description: (1) Virginia Military Institute

3. Superintendent's Quarters: As with the Commandant's Quarters and Barracks this building bears the American Gothic revival stamp of A. J. Davis. Designed in 1850-51, construction was completed in 1862. Along with the Commandant's Quarters, this building was dismantled in 1914 and faithfully re-erected 104 yards northwest of its original location under Goodhue's direction. The only conspicuous structural change was the elimination of a second-floor balcony around a two-story entrance hall. The house consists of a basement, two stories, one room on the third floor of each of two towers, and two bays where octagonal rooms extend beyond the front of the building. Above basement level the wall construction is brick, stuccoed (float finish). In 1924 improvements were made under supervision of Carneal and Johnston, architects and engineers of Richmond; in 1931 the Institute's administrative offices were moved from the east wing to the Engineering Building. These rooms were converted to a guest suite. More recently the building has received further improvements, and some wooden floors replaced. Fireproofing provisions have also been added.

4. Pendleton-Coles House: The design of this faculty residence is attributed to Alexander Jackson Davis and construction dated in the early 1850's. This coincides with the period when Davis was designing faculty residences for the Institute across the Parade Ground, and it was during this period that he visited Lexington. Local folklore has it that plans for this house were adapted from those for one of Davis' cottage designs. The house, resembling the rustic Gothic cottage style of Davis, is a typical example of a style popular during the mid-19th century, though not at all prevalent in the region of the Valley of Virginia. Its outstanding features are the arched windows with diamond panes and the decorative bargeboard around the gables.

5. Old Hospital: Little is known of this building except that it was constructed in 1848 and served as a hospital at one time and a tailor shop at another. Today it is used for storage. A rectangular two-story brick building with center hall plan, it has a cedar shaked gable roof with front leanto extension above a two-tiered porch and inside end chimneys serving fireplaces at both levels.

6. "Stono": This was the residence of John Jordan, builder of VMI, Washington and Lee University's Centre Hall, contractor to the State Arsenal at Lexington, and most prominent builder of the Rockbridge region. "Stono" is Roman Revival in style and the earliest verified neoclassical structure west of the Blue Ridge. A simplified version of Jeffersonian classicism, it has a central portion of temple form, its proportions tall and slender. The portico consists of a double porch and steeply rising pediment resting on four graceful Tuscan columns. On either side of the center section are two low, one story wings.

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7. Description: (2) Virginia Military Institute

7. New Hospital: Built in the 1850s by John Jordan as a house for his son, Samuel F. Jordan, the building was taken over by VMI and used as the Institute's hospital.

8. Quarters: Two large brick quarters probably built in the 1870s flank the new hospital.

II. The "Hyphen" Area: This is the area on both sides of southern end of Letcher Avenue, so called because of the manner in which it links the two campuses of VMI and Washington and Lee University. That linkage consists entirely of faculty residences dating from antebellum years to the late 19th century. Style and materials are mixed with frame buildings interspersed with brick; and neo-Classic structures with Gothic.

The following are of particular note:

9. Archer House: Built in the 1850s the Archer House was a major faculty residence. A large two-story red-brick building of classic proportions it sits high on a slope, its porch raised above ground level and reached by a flight of stairs.

10. Faculty Residence: This structure, probably built in the 1870's sits just south and next to the Archer House. Also large and handsome with two stories and set on the same slope, it too is entered by a steep flight of stairs which rise to the first level of a two-tiered porch. The roof is hipped with dormers at both ends and double inside chimneys. The windows are elongated with semi-circular arches and the doorway is set in a Tudor-arched opening.

11. Faculty Residence: This building at the east side of Letcher Avenue and Maiden Lane is a classic brick structure with colonnaded porch and pediment. It looks like the design of many of the Washington and Lee University Buildings. Indeed, it was one of them but is presently owned by VMI.

12. Faculty Residence: A simple red-brick house on the east side of Letcher Avenue flanked by two frame residences.

13. Faculty Residence: A double house, side to side, located at 313 Letcher Avenue, it is the only frame building of particular attraction and interest.

The long-range plan required by the Commonwealth of Virginia, calls for the demolition of the "hyphen" area. Nevertheless, there is no current active pursuit of this objective.

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7. Description: (3) Virginia Military Institute

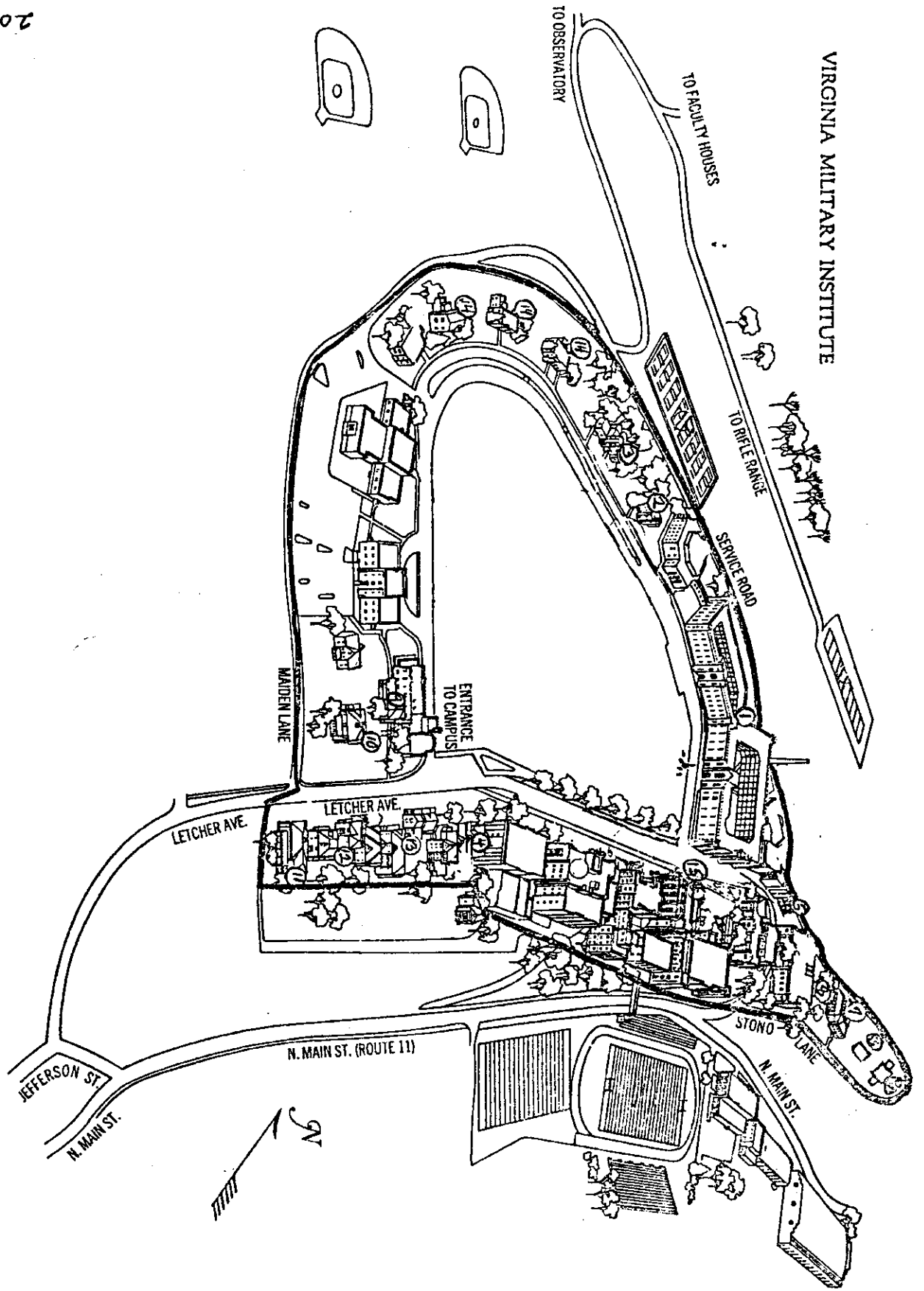
III. The Goodhue Design: In 1914, Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue designed three faculty residences in the Gothic tradition and aligned them in an arch extending around the north end of the Parade Ground. They demonstrate an admirable compatibility of design with the earlier quarters.

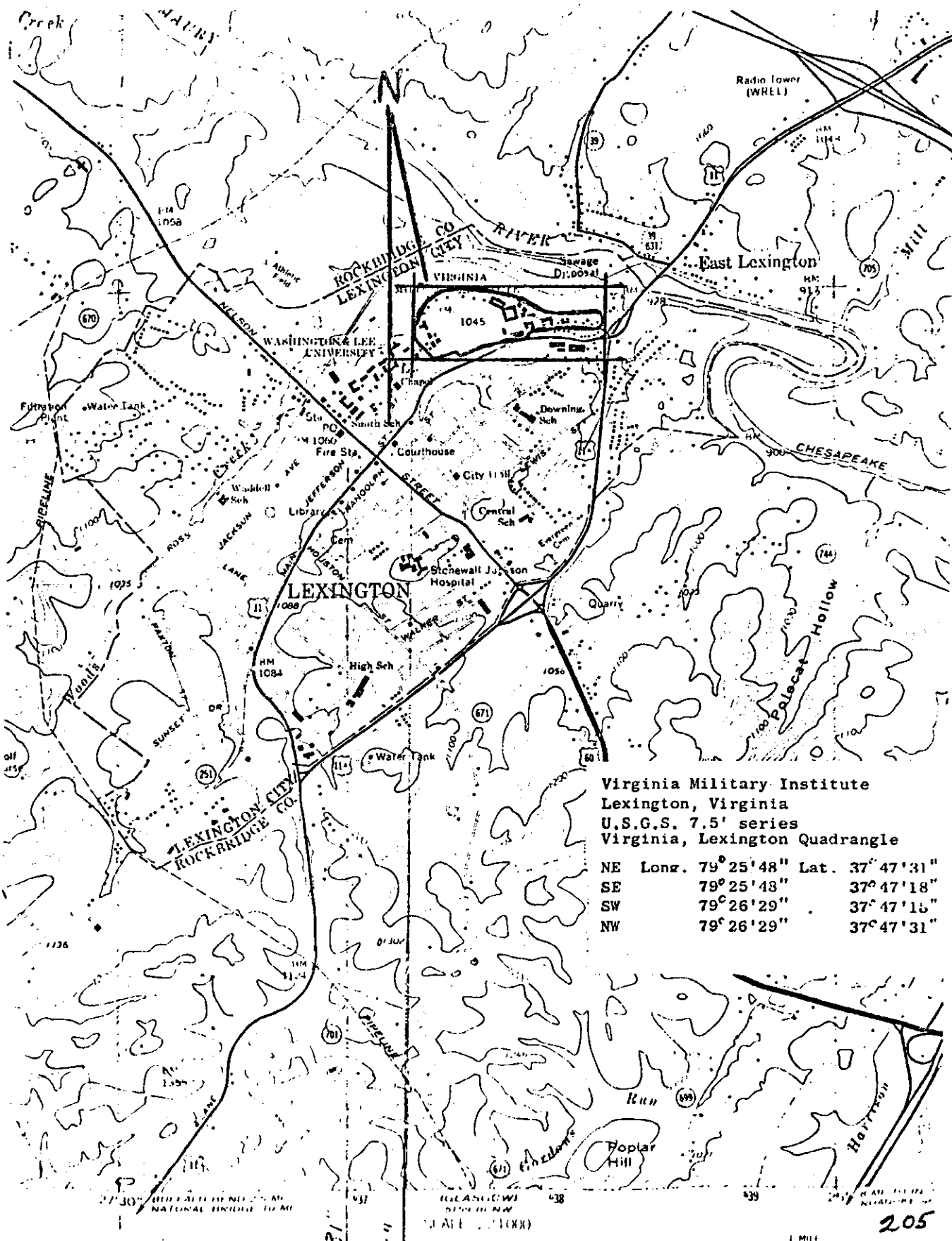
14. Goodhue-designed residences.

15. Jackson Memorial Hall: A fine rendition of compatible neo-Gothic style, designed to frame, along with a building like Scott-Shipp Hall, the original Washington Arch facade of the Barracks.

It should be observed that the boundary of the historic district contains within it buildings which have not been singled out as having special importance. The boundary is more comprehensive because, while many of the buildings included within it are not as "historic" as the ones specified, they do retain a compatibility of scale, material, design, and nexus with the older structures which is essential to the ambience of the historic district.

Boundary: As shown in red on the accompanying map, beginning at the intersection of Letcher Avenue and Maiden Lane, a line, running northwest along Maiden Lane to where it merges with the service road behind the faculty quarters and other buildings facing the Parade Ground and continuing along that service road around "Stono" (John Jordan House) and return in a southeast direction along Stono Lane to the rear property line of Cocke Hall and Annex, Nichols Hall, Preston Library, Mallory Hall, Pendleton-Coles House and the faculty residences fronting on the east side of Letcher Avenue to the conjunction with Maiden Lane, thence northwest along Maiden Lane to the conjunction with Letcher Avenue.





Virginia Military Institute
 Lexington, Virginia
 U.S.G.S. 7.5' series
 Virginia, Lexington Quadrangle

NE	Long. 79° 25' 48"	Lat. 37° 47' 31"
SE	79° 25' 48"	37° 47' 18"
SW	79° 26' 29"	37° 47' 15"
NW	79° 26' 29"	37° 47' 31"